

# Board of Trustees Update: January 2026

**SER's Mission:** To advance energy-driven economic development for Wyoming

## SER Administration:

- **Leadership:** Scott Quillinan was appointed Acting Executive Director on November 21st.
- **Budget:** The SER budget hearing with the Wyoming Joint Appropriations hearing was held on December 10<sup>th</sup>.
- **Executive Director Search:** SER Outreach is coordinating with the Energy Resources Council, the search committee, and Spencer Stuart to launch and advertise the Executive Director search.

## SER Academics:

- **Subsurface Energy Certificate:** SER, in collaboration with CEPS, has completed a feasibility study for the Subsurface Energy Certificate and advanced the proposal through campus approvals for consideration at the January BOT meeting.
- **Enrollment:** Enrollment at SER is at an all-time high with a new record for Fall 2025!

## SER Outreach:

- **Spring 2026 Events:** Planning is underway for major Spring 2026 outreach activities, including the Rocky Mountain Land and Resources Management Conference (April) and the SER Distinguished Speaker Series.
- **Communications:** The winter quarterly newsletter for the School of Energy Resources will be published in January.

**SER Research:** SER's research program supports a broad portfolio of Wyoming-focused initiatives designed to generate long-term state revenue, strengthen industry partnerships, and train students with expertise critical to Wyoming's energy future. The program engages faculty, staff, and students across the university and within SER's Centers of Excellence.

Several federally sponsored projects are undergoing routine DOE programmatic review. While this may lead to scope adjustments or temporary pauses, SER remains engaged with industry partners and prepared to respond as federal guidance is clarified.

- **Center for Economic Geology Research (CEGR)**
  - CEGR completed Phase III of the Wyoming CarbonSAFE project, advancing reservoir characterization of a carbon management storage complex near Dry Fork Station north of Gillette with Basin Electric Power Cooperative and multiple public and private partners.
- **Center for Carbon Capture and Conversion (CCCC)**
  - Coal Refinery Field Demonstration Plant

- *Construction Progress:* Construction continues on the pyrolysis portion of the coal refinery field demonstration plant at the Wyoming Innovation Center in Gillette, advancing SER's efforts to develop value-added products from Wyoming coal.
    - *Pyrolyzer Schedule:* Pyrolyzer fabrication is scheduled to begin in January 2026.
    - *Power Distribution Center:* The Power Distribution Center (PDC), a critical electrical hub for the demonstration plant, was installed in mid-December.
  - *Solvent Extraction:*
    - *Pilot-Scale Progress:* The solvent extraction team completed successful extended pilot-scale runs this fall. Process refinements include a more economical filtration design and the identification of a marketable byproduct that could offset solvent costs and improve project economics.
    - *Detailed Engineering and Design:* Data from pilot operations will inform detailed engineering for the solvent extraction field demonstration plant, scheduled to begin in February 2026.
- *Carbon Engineering and Critical Minerals*
  - *Critical Minerals:* Research continues on the extraction and separation of critical minerals and rare earth elements from coal refinery process streams and other unconventional feedstocks.
  - *Graphite Development:* Researchers are evaluating graphite production from pyrolysis-derived materials, including work using Kemmerer coal as a feedstock. This effort is supported by a research gift from Kemmerer Operations to assess commercial potential.
- ***Energy Engagement Leadership and Careers (Energy ELC):***
  - *Nuclear Curriculum:* The Energy ELC program is developing high school-level nuclear curriculum modules titled *Knowing Nuclear*. Ten modules are currently in development and are expected to be completed in Spring 2026, aligned with Wyoming state science standards.
- ***Hydrogen Energy Research Center (H2ERC)***
  - *Water treatment/Steam Methane Reformer:* H2ERC has assembled and prepared its steam methane reforming unit for testing and continues construction of the integrated water treatment and hydrogen production system.
  - *Geological Hydrogen:* The Hestia geological hydrogen project completed a series of laboratory pyrolysis tests to evaluate hydrogen generation from organic-rich rock formations.
- ***Center for Energy Regulation and Policy Analysis (CERPA)***
  - *Wyoming Hydrogen Report:* a comprehensive assessment of hydrogen markets, regulatory frameworks, workforce impacts, and policy considerations relevant to commercial-scale hydrogen deployment in Wyoming.

## Enhanced Oil Recovery Institute (EORI)

**Mission:** The mission of EORI is to work collaboratively with the Wyoming oil and gas industry and provide technical expertise to minimize stranded oil reserves, extend field life, and add revenue to the State of Wyoming through additional taxes from incremental production.

- **EORI Overview:** Since its establishment in 2004, EORI projects have returned more than ten dollars for every dollar invested by the State of Wyoming. Funded directly by the Wyoming State Legislature through the Enhanced Oil Recovery Commission (EORC – Agency 070), is the only State institute exclusively focused on improving and enhancing oil recovery in Wyoming fields.
- **Budget:** The EORC FY27–28 Biennium Budget request includes a \$558,802 increase to support two additional staff positions, with the Governor’s support. This request will be discussed at the January EORC/JAC budget hearing.
- **Projects and Engagement:**
  - EORI is currently collaborating with industry partners on 23 projects, with three additional projects in development.
  - EORI continues its quarterly *EOR Insights* industry forum.
  - The EORC 4th Quarter meeting was held virtually on November 18, 2025.
  - EORI staff volunteered with the Wyoming Food Bank in December, supporting food distribution for approximately 1,300 families.